

REMARKS

This amendment is in response to the Official Action dated December 17, 2004. The drawings, specification and Claims 1-5 have been amended. Claims 1-5 remain in the application with Claim 1 being the only independent claim. Favorable reconsideration, in view of the above amendments and accompanying remarks, is respectfully requested.

In the Official Action the Examiner has objected to the drawings for the reasons noted therein. It is believed that the above proposed changes to the drawings overcome the Examiner's objection.

In the Official Action the Examiner has objected to Claims 1, 3 and 5 for the reason noted therein. It is believed that the above changes to Claims 1, 3 and 5 overcome these objections.

In the Official Action the Examiner has rejected Claims 1-5 under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by German Patent DE 2,925,234 and Claims 1 and 5 under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 102(b), as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,216,754 to Smith et al. These rejections are respectfully traversed in light of the amendments to the claims.

As amended, Claim 1 now defines the invention as an assembly consisting of a vehicle component and a ball joint, the ball joint including a housing, a ball stud and a sealing bellows which lies against the housing and the ball stud in order to seal between the housing and the ball stud, the ball stud having a holding surface against which a sealing surface of the sealing bellows lies and a shoulder, and the sealing surface, when not being deformed and as seen along a longitudinal axis of the ball stud, being longer than the holding surface, the ball joint being mounted to the component such that the sealing surface is compressed in an axial direction between the shoulder and the component. None of the cited references, alone or in combination, discloses or suggests such an assembly as defined in Claim 1.

Specifically, German Patent DE 2,945,234 does not disclose or suggest a sealing bellows having a sealing shoulder which is "compressed in an axial direction between said shoulder and said component", as recited in Claim 1. Rather, as shown

in the only figure of this reference that the Examiner has provided as a marked-up attachment, that portion of the sealing bellows 2 which contacts ball stud 11 has, measured in an axial direction, exactly the same length as the holding surface A4 at which it is attached. Accordingly, there can be no axial compression. U.S. Patent No. 3,216,754 to Smith et al. discloses a ball joint having a shank 12 which is used for mounting the ball joint to a component. However, Smith et al. does not disclose or suggest that bead 84 of sealing bellows 80 contacts this component or is compressed by this component as recited in Claim 1. Furthermore, Smith et al. does not disclose that the ball stud includes a shoulder, as recited in Claim 1. Accordingly, it is believed that Claim 1, along with dependent Claims 2-5, are patentable over the cited references.

In view of the above amendments and accompanying remarks, it is believed that the application is in condition for allowance. However, if the Examiner does not believe that the above remarks and amendments place the application in condition for allowance, or if the Examiner has any comments or suggestions, it is requested that the Examiner contact Applicants' attorney at (419) 255-5900 to discuss the application prior to the issuance of an action in this case by the Examiner.

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please amend drawing Fig. 1 by adding the dimensions identified by reference characters A and B as shown in red on the attached drawings. Attached herewith are "Replacement Sheets" of Sheet 1 of 1, Figs. 1 and 2, and "Annotated Marked-Up Drawings" of Sheet 1 of 1, Figs. 1 and 2. Formal drawings will be submitted upon approval of these changes and issuance of a Notice of Allowance.



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Sheet 1 of 1

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# ANNOTATED MARKED-UP DRAWINGS

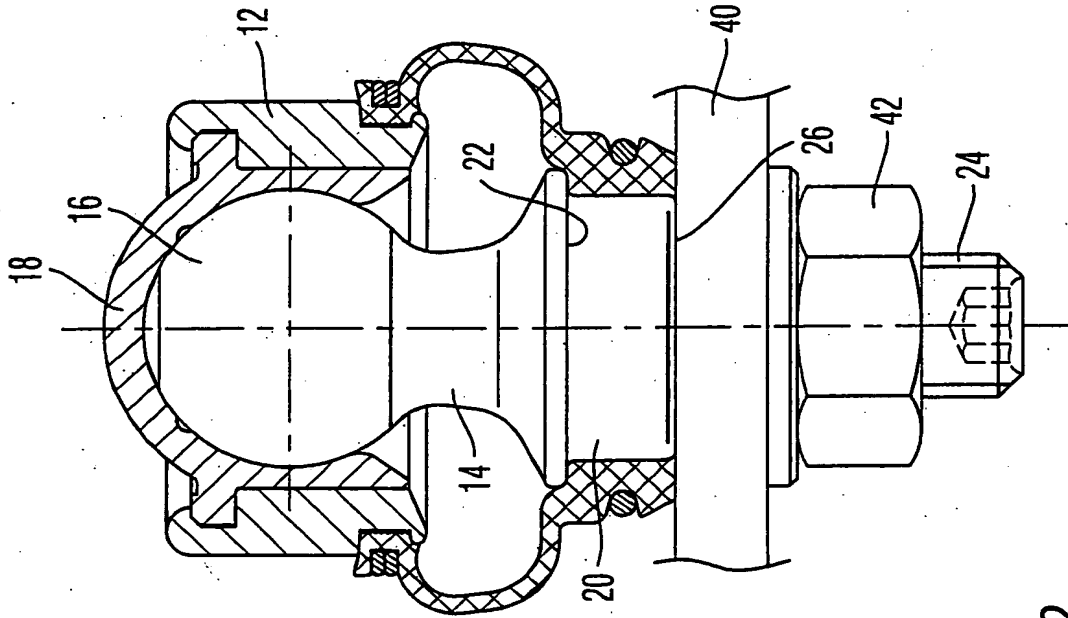


Fig. 2

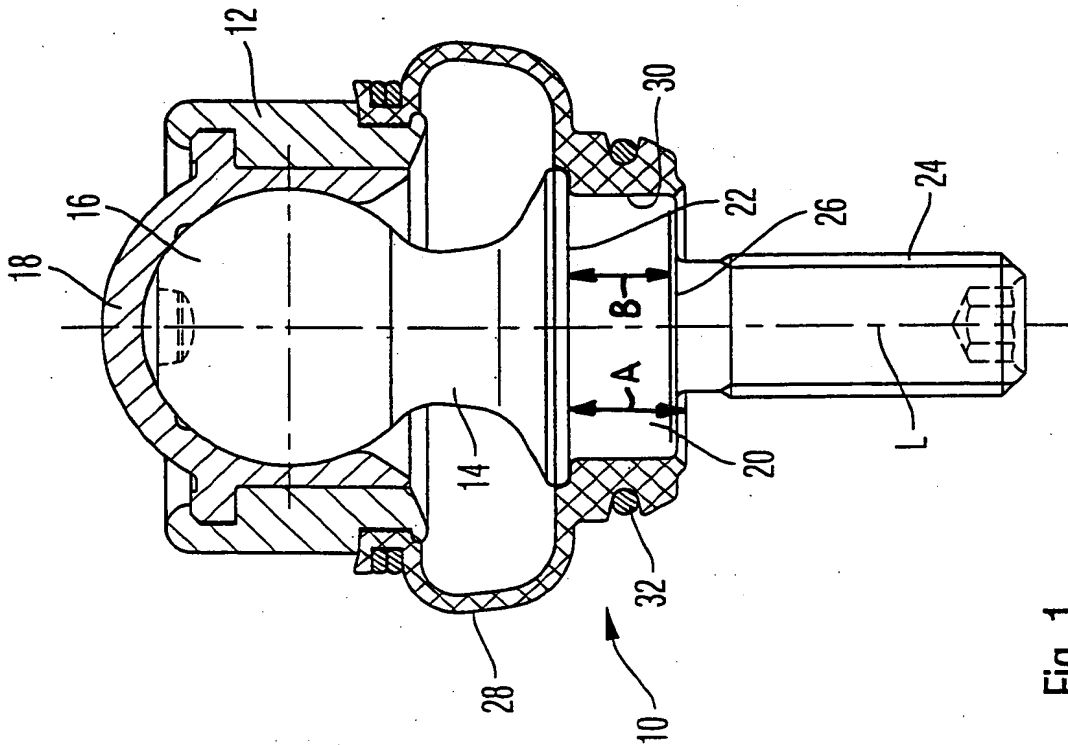


Fig. 1